

FOR IMMEDIATE

RELEASE

LOS ANGELES COMMITTEE FOR
PROTECTION OF FOREIGN BORN

326 W. 3rd ST. • LOS ANGELES 13, CALIF.
ROSE CHERNIN, Executive Director • MADison 5-2169

JUNE 15, 1954

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A N O P E N L E T T E R

T O

ATTORNEY GENERAL HERBERT J. BROWNELL, JR.

To the Honorable Herbert J. Brownell, Jr.,
United States Department of Justice,
Washington, D.C.

We have read -- with profound shock -- of the results of your recent trip to Los Angeles.

We read that, on your personal orders, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, deportation arm of the Justice Department, this week will launch "the Government's biggest offensive against Mexican laborers in history".

We read of "reinforced ranks" of border guards and patrols; of plans to "flush out" illegals in the fields and industrial plants and to institute terror raids against all Mexican-American communities.

We read of your plans, already going forward according to local Director Herman Landon, to build a wire-enclosed "security camp" -- a concentration camp if you please -- in F Elysian Park in the heart of Los Angeles.

We say that your visit here should have had a different purpose.

- 1) To learn first-hand and stop the terroristic mal-practices of your immigration authorities in this area, and the entire Southwest.
- 2) To consult with the leaders of the Mexican-American community who know and have voiced repeated protests against indignities heaped by the immigration service and its officers upon minority people.
- 3) To call a halt to the private questionings without benefit of counsel; to the mass round-ups of Mexican nationals lured here by big growers on the promise of work; to the illegal searches and seizures; to the arrests without warrants; to private "hearings" without adequate defenders; imprisonments without bail and to the mass deportations which last year alone tossed 876,000 Mexican nationals across the border.

The insult to the Mexican-American community is unmistakable and will be deemed as such by all who remember the Relocation Camps of World War II wherein Japanese nationals and native born Americans were indiscriminately caged.

"Security camps" and "stockades"; "flying squads" of deputies who "sweep" through fields, factories and communities "to ferret out ... to capture ... to herd over the border" defenseless Mexican laborers, have no place in the language of a democracy, nor do the unlawful, police-state acts which accompany them.

We therefore urge, Mr. Attorney-General, that you issue substitute orders to stop this now stepped-up harassment and that you implement these orders by constructive action, such as sponsorship in Congress of the attached draft bill.

We further urge that you use your office, under the Constitution which you have sworn to uphold, to insure that all who live here whatever their birth -- be given the protection of our Constitution and its democratic laws.